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Burundi configuration

Summary record of the 3rd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 20 March 2008, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Løvald ..... (Norway)

Contents

Adoption of the agenda

Adoption of the conclusions and recommendations of the Peacebuilding Commission on the situation in Burundi

Other matters

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08-27790 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda (PBC/2/BDI/6)

1. **The Chairperson** said that, in accordance with established practice and as allowed by the Commission's rules of procedure, and if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Commission wished to hold the meeting as an open one.

2. *It was so decided.*

3. **The Chairperson** invited the Commission to adopt the provisional agenda in document PBC/2/BDI/6.

4. *The agenda was adopted.*

5. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the representative of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations took a place at the Commission table.*

Adoption of the conclusions and recommendations of the Peacebuilding Commission on the situation in Burundi (PBC/2/BDI/L.1)

6. **The Chairperson** drew attention to the conclusions and recommendations of the Peacebuilding Commission developed by members of the Burundi configuration based on his own proposal. The document had been prepared following his participation in a meeting of special representatives and special envoys on Burundi convened by the Government of South Africa, in its capacity as Facilitator of the Burundi peace process, from 22 to 23 February 2008 in Cape Town. The Programme of Action to Take Further the Burundi Peace Process had been discussed at the meeting and, shortly thereafter, it had been presented to the Government of Burundi and to the Parti pour la libération du peuple hutu-Forces nationales de libération (PALIPEHUTU-FNL).

7. The document before the Commission outlined its observations on the renewed efforts made by the South African Facilitation, the Regional Peace Initiative for Burundi, the African Union and the United Nations to implement the 2006 Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement between the Government of Burundi and PALIPEHUTU-FNL, as reflected in the Cape Town Programme of Action. The document contained conclusions which reflected the Commission's agreement with the consensus reached in Cape Town concerning the responsibilities and roles of the key actors in the peacebuilding process in Burundi. It also issued recommendations for stakeholders involved in the process to take action to resolve issues collectively and to conclude the implementation of the Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement within the new deadlines.

8. In addition, the document stated that while the Commission remained hopeful and optimistic about the progress achieved in consolidating peace in Burundi, recent reports of violent incidents and political issues that hindered the proper functioning of the Parliament warranted continued vigilance and commitment from the Government of Burundi and its national and international partners, in order to ensure the fulfilment of obligations with respect to the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding.

9. He said that he took it that the Peacebuilding Commission's Burundi configuration wished to adopt the document.

10. *It was so decided.*

11. **The Chairperson** said that, as reflected in the document just adopted, the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission would continue to pay close attention to developments in Burundi and to monitor both progress and risks related to the consolidation of peace. It was his intention to continue to update members of the Commission on his participation in the activities of the group of special envoys on Burundi, whose next meeting was scheduled to take place in May 2008 in New York.

12. **Mr. Zver** (European Community) welcomed the adoption of document PBC/2/BDI/L.1 and noted the European Union's continued commitment to moving the peace process forward in Burundi. In that connection, the European Union had recently issued a statement regretting the attacks that had taken place at the homes of several parliamentarians in Bujumbura on the evening of 8 March 2008. He also welcomed similar expressions of concern voiced recently by the United Nations and the African Union in that respect.

13. The paralysis of some institutions in Burundi, particularly the National Assembly, and the persistence of violent clashes between security forces and elements of the PALIPEHUTU-FNL continued to be matters of concern. All political players should re-engage in the dialogue, consensus building and inclusiveness that had marked the Burundian transition and consolidation process to date.

14. The efforts of the Facilitation, the Regional Peace Initiative and the Political Directorate were welcome. Their continued involvement alongside the international community remained essential to ensure that PALIPEHUTU-FNL resumed its participation in the Joint Verification and Monitoring Mechanism so that the Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement could be fully and expeditiously implemented.

15. **Mr. Dhaene** (Belgium) also welcomed the adoption of document PBC/2/BDI/L.1, which could provide a useful model for future activities. Reiterating the need for the Commission's work to keep pace with developments on the ground as far as possible, he noted that the current document was fully in keeping with that approach.

16. **The Chairperson** said that, in keeping with past practice, the document would be forwarded to the Presidents of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

Other matters

17. **The Chairperson** said that, in addition to monitoring the peacebuilding process, the Burundi configuration would pursue the implementation of its own commitments. In its work, the Commission should be guided by flexibility and responsiveness to developments in Burundi, while remaining mindful of the critical benchmarks that had been set for achieving the goals of the Strategic Framework.

18. Following consultations with the Government of Burundi and the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi, it had been agreed that discussions on how the Commission would fulfil its commitment to support the establishment of an independent national electoral commission would be postponed until later in 2008.

19. Consultations with the Government of Burundi also suggested that a thematic meeting on sustainable solutions to land issues should take place earlier rather than later in 2008, in view of the current pace and timeline set for the return of Burundian refugees from Tanzania. Further consultations would therefore be held with the Government of Burundi, the Peacebuilding Support Office, the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB) and agencies such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on the possibility of holding the meeting on 14 May 2008. In that regard, he drew attention to the recent appeals made by the World Food Programme and UNHCR for funding to assist Burundian refugees. Continued humanitarian assistance to Burundian refugees returning home was critical to Burundi's path to recovery and peace consolidation. The World Food Programme had indicated that, as a result of pipeline breaks in May and June of the current year, it would urgently require six million dollars in order to continue to provide food assistance for the 90,000 refugees who were expected to return to Burundi in 2008. Some 45,000 refugees from Burundi were expected to return home in 2008, and another 35,000 in 2009. UNHCR was appealing for $21.8 million in 2008 and another $19.6 million in 2009 to support reintegration and other key activities inside Burundi.

20. The Commission's visit to Burundi was scheduled from 19 to 24 April 2008. The Peacebuilding Support Office had started to work on the logistical arrangements for the visit and it would contact the members of the delegation regarding travel arrangements in due course. An informal meeting of Burundi country-specific mandate holders to be held on 9 April 2008 would enable the arrangements to be finalized, including the programme and the messages to be conveyed by the Commission's delegation.

21. **Mr. Dhaene** (Belgium) said that, with respect to the programme of work, his delegation fully agreed with the need for a specific meeting on land issues related to the return of refugees. It also agreed that a meeting on the independent national electoral commission should be held later in the year, once the Burundi authorities had been brought up to speed on that issue. Lastly, while a delegation from Belgium was not participating in the forthcoming visit to Burundi, he requested that his Embassy be associated to the fullest extent possible with that visit.

22. **The Chairperson** reiterated that it was very important for the Commission's delegation to maintain close contacts with its partners on the ground. Every effort would therefore be made to adopt such an approach while developing the programme of work.

23. **Mr. Ustinov** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation wished to associate itself with the request just made by Belgium.

24. **The Chairperson** said that the visit to Burundi would also be extremely important with a view to preparing for the first biannual review to be held by the Commission on 23 June 2008.

25. He also noted that he was cooperating on an event with the International Peace Academy to be held on 9 June 2008. The event would gather together non-traditional donors, civil society and interested members of the Peacebuilding Commission with a view to focusing attention on Burundi's resource requirements.

26. Lastly, he noted that a revised version of the 2008 workplan for Burundi country-specific mandate holders would be circulated to delegations within the following week.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.